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## FRIENDSHIP IN ENGLISH POETRY.

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MR. JOHN STUART MILL has this remarkable passage in his autobiography :

“—— was a man of very quick and strong sensibilities ; but, like most Englishmen who have feelings, he found his feelings very much in his way, . . . and, looking for happiness elsewhere than in them, he wished that his feelings should be deadened rather than quickened. And, in truth, the English character and English circumstances make it so seldom possible to derive happiness from the exercise of the sympathies, that it is not wonderful if they count for little in an Englishman's scheme of happiness. In most other countries the paramount importance of the sympathies as a constituent of individual happiness is an axiom, taken for granted, rather than needing any formal statement ; but most English thinkers seem to regard them as necessary evils, required for keeping men's actions benevolent and compassionate, but not as necessary elements of their happiness.”

It is well to see ourselves as we appear to the eyes of foreigners, and a foreigner Mr. Mill may be almost said to have been, so entirely had he been brought up aloof from the great currents of English tradition, so persistently had his early views and character been molded in antagonism to the sentiments of English society. We cannot, therefore, expect to learn from him what is best in the inner life of England ; but, as to its defects, we may gather something from his not too favorable verdict.

It is, no doubt, the tradition of the English gentleman, whatever feelings he may have, to do his best to conceal them. The temperament of the Teutonic races, we know, is undemonstrative, as compared with the peoples of the South ; and in England this natural self-repression is increased by the training that our cultivated men receive in the public schools and by the discipline of the army and the great public professions. These accustom men not only to control, but to disguise, all their deepest emotions. Indeed, the habitual manner of Englishmen, after they have passed childhood, confines all show of affection to members

of their own home circle, sometimes bestowing it scantily enough even upon these. This, perhaps, is the reason why Englishmen are so little liked by foreigners; the reason, too, why they succeed so badly in conciliating conquered races. All expression of sympathy toward strangers they restrain so sternly, that these believe they have no sympathy to express. Hence, while they respect the strength and the justice of the English, they dislike them.

Strangers who saw only this side of English character might naturally fancy that this rigid self-restraint would stifle all poetry. Yet, in spite of this habitual frigidity, it may be as the natural recoil from it, we have in our poetry as strong and deep a volume of emotion as any European nation can show. It is not only that the poet is by nature a fiery creature, incapable of toning down his spontaneous feelings to the rules of social convention, but he has in his art a safety-valve for the strongest emotion, a medium through which he can express feelings that he would not venture to whisper into the friendliest ear, much less to commit to the language of plain prose. Perhaps, too, the frigid decorum that dominates English society may serve to intensify by contrast the warmth of pent-up emotion that seeks relief in poetry. Just as we see that persons who are habitually reserved, if once they break through their wonted bonds, lay stronger hold on the hearts of their hearers than those who are always effusive.

In turning to our English poets, to see how they have dealt with the affection of friendship, it is necessary to remember that the word with us bears a much more definite and restricted meaning than *φιλία* had among the Greeks. The Greek word includes all finest affection, all highest heart-sympathy, whether bestowed on those within the range of kindred or on those beyond it; while it is to regard for the latter, for those who are not kindred, but chosen by affection, that we generally confine the term friendship. Again, in Greece, for lack of the higher family life, and of a religion in which the heart could rest, *φιλία* absorbed into itself most of the pure and tender devotion that in modern life enters into the conjugal and the parental affections. And with us religion wears so much more inward and attractive an aspect, that it draws to itself much for which affectionate and devout natures of the old time found an outlet only in *φιλία*. But while this may be said on the one side, it is

no less true, on the other, that hearts into which the Christian spirit has found entrance have thereby gained a great background, to elevate and hallow earthly affection by heavenward sympathy and immortal hope.

If England has poured forth her genuine heart through any literary channel, it is through her poetry. Therein we see the deepest affections, and especially the friendships of many of her most gifted children, age after age, embalmed in forms of undying beauty. And if, in attempting to bring together a few of the most striking of these records, I confine myself to the chief poets of each succeeding period, I am well aware that I must needs pass unnoticed many another record, as worthy of remembrance as those I have cited. Still, it will be something to have suggested, however cursorily, a line of thought that other, younger persons may at leisure follow out for themselves.

A friend and younger contemporary of Shakspeare, one of his boon companions, who had shared with him many a merry-meeting, and, as tradition says, that last merry-meeting at Stratford immediately before his fatal illness, has left a record of his admiration and affection for him. Ben Jonson, who was a stern enough censor of most men, speaks of gentle Will as "honest, and of an open and free nature," and says that his "mind and manners are reflected in his well-tuned and well-filled lines." In the poem addressed "To the Memory of my Beloved Master, William Shakspeare," Jonson apostrophizes him as

"Soul of the age!

The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!"

"Triumph, my Britain! thou hast one to show,  
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time."

"Sweet swan of Avon, what a sight it were  
To see thee in our waters yet appear,  
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,  
That so did take Eliza and our James!  
Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage  
Or influence chide or cheer the drooping stage,  
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like night,  
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light."

These lines, if less grand than Milton's well-known epitaph, show quite as high an appreciation of Shakspeare's genius. In

all that Ben Jonson has said of him, both in verse and in his recorded sayings, there is not only admiration for him as a poet, but love for him as a friend.

With so many more important things before me, I need hardly pause over the lines that Jonson's host, Drummond of Hawthornden, styling himself "Damon," addressed to his friend, or brother poet, Sir William Alexander, as "Alexis." Pass on a little later, and we come to Abraham Cowley. No poet's reputation ever underwent such a strange revolution. In his own day he was esteemed the greatest poet of the time, the equal of the best of the Greeks and Romans. Within seventy years from his death, Pope asked, "who now reads Cowley?" If that question could be asked in Pope's time, how much more may it be asked now? What is the cause of this strange reversal of contemporary judgment? Cowley was the victim of that false taste which, with many changes, had reigned since euphuism set in. He was the king of the fantastic school of poetry, in which pedantry, conceit, metaphysics, and forced wit took the place of natural thought and feeling and of natural language. In him the fashion of the day culminated, and he has paid the penalty by permanent oblivion. Yet, when moved by genuine affection and sorrow, he could shake off all his mannerisms and contortions, and pour forth his feelings in as pure, simple, and manly a style as any poet. The poetry of the seventeenth century contains no more feelingly expressed lament than that in which Cowley mourned the death of Mr. William Hervey :

"My sweet companion, and my gentle peer,  
Why hast thou left me thus unkindly here,  
Thy end forever, and my life to moan?  
O, thou hast left me all alone!  
Thy soul and body, when death's agony  
Besieged around thy noble heart,  
Did not with more reluctance part,  
Than I, my dearest friend, do part from thee.

"My dearest friend, would I had died for thee!  
Life and this world henceforth will tedious be,  
Nor shall I know hereafter what to do,  
If now my griefs prove tedious, too.

"He was my friend, the truest friend on earth;  
 A strong and mighty influence joined our birth;  
 Nor did we envy the most sounding name  
 By friendship given of old to fame.

"Ye fields of Cambridge, our dear Cambridge, say,  
 Have ye not seen us walking every day?  
 Was there a tree about which did not know  
 The love betwixt us two?

"O, if the glorious saints cease not to know  
 Their wretched friends who fight with life below;  
 Thy flame to me does still the same abide,  
 Only more pure and rarefied.  
 There while immortal hymns thou dost rehearse,  
 Thou dost with holy pity see  
 Our dull and earthly poesy,  
 Where grief and misery can be joined with verse."

Compare this with most of Cowley's poetry, and you will at once see the difference. It is a perilous thing for a poet to commit himself to the fashions of the hour. For not only the fashions of style change, but the fashions of thought also change, and with them the intellectual language. Only the pure language of the heart changes not. That is simple and universal, and for all time.

Milton was a solitary, self-sustained soul, and needed less than most men the support of intimate friendship. Either he dwelt apart, feeding on "the lonely rapture of a lonely mind," or he threw himself into the current of political and ecclesiastical strife. Once, however, in his twenty-ninth year, he deigned to dedicate one poem to the memory of a friend. Over his college companion, Edward King, a young man of great promise, who perished by shipwreck in the Irish Channel, Milton made a lament that for splendor of imagery and diction has been well said to be "unmatched in the whole range of English poetry, and was never again equaled by himself." "Lycidas" has been well called the tide-mark of the brightest inspiration of the seventeenth century. It glows, indeed, with a burning passion, but it is not the passion of personal affection, mourning an irreparable loss; for Milton's relation to King was not that of devoted friendship. Rather the passion of the poem comes from his long-pent brooding over the fallen state of the church, and

indignation at its corruptions. This is the center of the poem, and supplies its central heat. For the rest, its form is borrowed from the artificial model of the Greek idyl or the Latin pastoral. And nothing more proves Milton's marvelous power than his ability to fuse such seemingly discordant elements—the frigid, classic Arcadianism and the Puritan fervor—into so harmonious and splendid a whole. Perhaps no other poet that ever lived could have succeeded in so difficult a task. But none the less for this we cannot admit it to be one of the great poems of friendship, one in which that affection is paramount. The poet and the critic will always reserve for “*Lycidas*” their highest admiration; but personal affection will look elsewhere for tones to which its tenderness can respond.

The same may be said of two other poems, which have both been named in conjunction with “*Lycidas*”—the “*Adonais*” of Shelley and Mr. Arnold's “*Thyrsis*.” Each of these, starting from the theme of friendship, passes off into splendid imaginative effusions; but they do not suggest deep personal sorrow for the lost friend. As to “*Adonais*,” I quite agree with the judgment recently expressed, that it is probably Shelley's highest poetical achievement, and has in the world's eye united Shelley and Keats in a brotherhood that no time will dissolve. Yet the excellence of the poem lies not in the depth of personal attachment, but in the imaginative glory with which the life of Keats is invested. Intimate friendship could not be expected from the circumstances under which the two poets were acquainted with each other. They had met from time to time under the roof of Leigh Hunt, but had never passed much time together. For the early poems of Keats, “*Endymion*” or the others, Shelley had no great relish; it was only when Keats's marvelous fragment, “*Hyperion*,” appeared, that he was kindled to genuine admiration. And when Shelley, who had hoped to meet Keats in Italy, heard of his untimely death at Rome, his natural regret was roused to a deeper and more indignant sorrow by his belief that this gifted young poet had been done to death by the same unfair and unkindly criticism that had aimed against Shelley himself some of its most envenomed shafts. This, rather than the wail of bereaved friendship, is the inspiration of “*Adonais*.” The poem itself is not, like “*Lycidas*,” a pastoral in form, but it is more or less informed with classical imagery—invocations of *Urania*, and personified dreams,

desires, and adorations. Some of the early stanzas are somewhat vague; but the poem grows in power as it proceeds, and becomes more personal in the description of Byron as

“The pilgrim of eternity, whose fame  
Over his living head like heaven was bent,  
An early but enduring monument,  
Came veiling all the lightnings of his song  
In sorrow.”

And of Shelley himself as

“A pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift;  
A love in desolation marked; a power  
Girt round with weakness.”

Both of them come to mourn over the dead poet. At least, the poem culminates in these two stanzas with a clearness of outline and a majestic portraiture unusual in Shelley :

“The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,  
Far in the unapparent.—Chatterton  
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not  
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought,  
And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,  
Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot,  
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved.  
Oblivion, as they rose, shrank like a thing reproved.

“And many more whose names on earth are dark,  
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die,  
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.  
‘Thou art become as one of us,’ they cry;  
‘It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
Swung blind in unattended majesty,  
Silent alone amid a heaven of song.  
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou vesper of our throng!’”

This is grand poetry; yet for all its merit, it is, as I have said, the expression of poetic sympathy in admiration, not the voice of friend bewailing friend. As for “Thyrsis,” one of the finest and most perfect of all Mr. Arnold’s poems, this only need be said: no one admires its beauty more than I do, but I admire it rather as an idealized description of Oxford life and scenery, not so much as a true portrait of Arthur Clough, whose



broad brow and manly form were little in keeping with the Arcadian disguise of Corydon.

To go back to the time of Milton, from which I have digressed, there is nothing in the later years of the seventeenth century, or in the first half of the eighteenth, to detain us. There is not much in Dryden's "Lines to the pious memory of the accomplished young lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew," over which we need linger, though they do contain here and there a good verse, such as :

" Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child."

Dryden and Pope, however, kept their strength for satire and invective, and this style does not easily comport with hearty affectionateness. Indeed, till after the middle of the eighteenth century, English poetry was passing through a frigid zone, in which the tender feelings either died down, or at least kept silence.

Toward the close of last century a warmer breath touched the heart of society and set the deeper springs of feeling once more a-murmuring. This is seen conspicuously in Burns, who in his poetic epistles to his friends breathed forth his homely feelings with humor and pathos happily intermingled. Most of these friends were boon companions, "ranting, roaring billies," as he calls them, and the epistles to them have at times an over-alcoholic flavor. His sweetest songs he reserved for the tenderer sex. He could, however, even for his male friends, feel and express a serious and manly affection, as in his beautiful lament for the death of James, Earl of Glencairn. That nobleman had befriended the struggling poet more than any other of his order had done, and of this Burns bore a grateful and affectionate remembrance, which he commemorated not only in the lament, but by naming one of his sons James Glencairn, after his good benefactor. Though this was one of those unequal friendships of which Aristotle speaks, it was on both sides eminently sincere and honorable.

" The bridegroom may forget the bride  
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;  
The monarch may forget the crown  
That on his head an hour has been ;

“The mother may forget the child  
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;  
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,  
And a' that thou hast done for me.”

The gentle-hearted Cowper was by nature well fitted for friendship, but he lived so secluded a life that he had few men for friends. In his retirement his time was spent almost entirely with ladies. They watched over his weak bodily health, and did what they could to cheer his drooping spirits. One especially, Mary Unwin, the mother of his friend William Unwin, tended him for years. Their feelings toward each other, whatever they may at one time have been, had long passed into those of simple friendship; and toward the close of Mrs. Unwin's life Cowper addressed to her one of the few sonnets he ever composed, and there is hardly a sweeter in the English language:

“Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,  
Such aid from Heaven as some have feigned they drew,  
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new  
And undebased by praise of meaner things,  
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,  
I may record thy worth with honor due,  
In verse as musical as thou art true,  
And that immortalizes whom it sings.  
But thou hast little need. There is a book  
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,  
On which the eyes of God not seldom look,  
A chronicle of actions just and bright:  
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine;  
And, since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.”

With the opening of the present century the affections found an utterance in poetry fuller in volume, more varied and subtle in tone, than in any former period of our, perhaps of any, literature. There were fellowships among the poets that have left a poetic record, such as we have seen in the “Adonais.” There was the triumvirate of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, and of this there are several memorials. Perhaps one of the most noticeable is the poem that Coleridge addressed to Wordsworth, after hearing him read aloud his poem “The Prelude.” Seldom has poet had such a listener, one so gifted to comprehend his highest thoughts, and to respond to them in a strain like this:

“Friend of the wise! and teacher of the good!  
 Into my heart have I received that lay  
 More than historic—that prophetic lay,  
 Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)  
 Of the foundations and the building up  
 Of a human spirit thou hast dared to tell  
 What may be told.

“An Orphic song, indeed,  
 A song divine of high and passionate thoughts  
 To their own music chanted! O great Bard,  
 Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,  
 With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir  
 Of ever-enduring men. The truly great  
 Have all one age, and from one visible space  
 Shed influence.

“Eve following eve,  
 Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home  
 Is sweetest! Moments for their own sake hailed,  
 And more desired, more precious for thy song,  
 In silence listening, like a devout child,  
 My soul lay pensive, by thy various strain  
 Driven as in surges, now beneath the stars  
 With momentary stars of my own birth,  
 Fair constellated foam, still darting off  
 Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea  
 Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

“And then, O Friend, my comforter and guide!  
 Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!  
 Thy long-sustained song finally closed,  
 And thy deep voice had ceased; yet thou thyself  
 Wert still before my eyes, and round us both  
 That happy vision of beloved faces.  
 Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close,  
 I sate, my being blended in one thought  
 (Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)  
 Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound,  
 And when I rose I found myself in prayer.”

More than thirty years passed on, and Wordsworth had seen the poets, his contemporaries and his friends, one by one disappear—Walter Scott, Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Crabbe, Felicia Hemans, and the Ettrick Shepherd. On hearing of the death of the last of these, he was roused to one more effusion, almost

his latest, and worthy of his earliest inspiration. This is the way he spoke of Coleridge:

“Nor has the rolling year thrice measured,  
From sign to sign, its steadfast course,  
Since every mortal power of Coleridge  
Was frozen at its marvelous source.

“The ‘rapt one of the godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth,  
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,  
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

“Like clouds that rake the mountain summits,  
Or waves that own no curbing hand,  
How fast has brother followed brother,  
From sunshine to the sunless land!

“While I, whose lids from infant slumbers  
Were earlier raised, remain to hear  
A timid voice that asks in whispers,  
‘Who next will drop and disappear?’”

Few men ever lived of so friendly disposition as Walter Scott. Wherever he went, his spirit, at once manly and generous and healthful and homely, drew men to his side. To the early friends of his boyhood and youth he was constancy itself, and no change in his fortunes or reputation made him change toward them. The style of his poetry did not admit of many personal allusions. But in those delightful introductions to the several cantos of “*Marmion*,” you have Scott unbosoming himself to his several friends—Erskine, Skene, Heber, and the rest—in the most natural, unconstrained way, pouring forth his changing feelings, now grave, now gay, in verse that, if not highly wrought, is as healthy and sweet as the breeze that blows over his own border hills. Several of these introductions were written at that season when, summer long past, and autumn ending, he was setting face once more toward town and winter work; and certainly they have an autumnal tone, a pensiveness that we do not usually associate with Scott, but which lay deep in his nature, for all his hilarity. It is thus he speaks to his friend Marriot:

“When musing on companions gone,  
We doubly feel ourselves alone,  
Something, my friend, we yet may gain,  
There is a pleasure in this pain :  
It soothes the love of lonely rest  
Deep in each gentle heart impressed.

“Whispering a mingled sentiment  
”Twixt resignation and content.

“Of in my mind such thoughts awake,  
By lone St. Mary’s silent lake ;  
Thou know’st it well, nor fen nor sedge  
Pollute the pure lake’s crystal edge ;  
Abrupt and sheer the mountains sink  
At once upon the level brink.

“There’s nothing left to fancy’s guess,  
You see that all is loneliness.

“Your horse’s hoof-tread sounds too rude,  
So stilly is the solitude.”

To lovers of Scott these introductions will always be dear, for they reveal “the mighty minstrel” in his most natural and homely guise, opening his friendly heart in free converse with his chosen companions, about the things he most loved, his field sports, his border hills as they look under the changing seasons, his favorite tastes and studies, mingled with pensive reflections on life and man’s mortality.

Scott and Wordsworth were not so intimate as Wordsworth and Coleridge were; for they met only at intervals of years, as when Wordsworth crossed the border and visited Scott at Lasswade, in that famous Scottish tour of 1803; or when Scott visited the lakes, and had to adjourn from the cottage of the water-drinking poet to the Grasmere hostelry to get his daily glass of beer. But from that first meeting on the banks of Esk, when Scott repeated to Wordsworth and his sister parts of his yet unpublished “Lay,” down to Wordsworth’s farewell visit to Abbotsford with his daughter in September, 1831, nothing could be more hearty, even affectionate, than their intercourse. In poetry, indeed, as in other things, their style and tastes were different; but each respected and admired the manly

character and sterling genius of the other. No poet has left a more touching memorial of another than Wordsworth has left of Scott in his "Yarrow Revisited," in which he commemorated that autumn day when the two poets visited Yarrow together for the last time, just before Scott sailed for Italy:

"Once more, by Newark's castle-gate,  
Long left without a warder,  
I stood, looked, listened, and with thee,  
Great minstrel of the border."

"And if, as Yarrow, through the woods  
And down the meadow ranging,  
Did meet us with unaltered face,  
Though we were changed and changing,"—

Yet still they made a day of happy hours, their happy days recalling. Of the rest of that pathetic visit, let me give Wordsworth's own account:

"On our return in the afternoon [from Yarrow], we had to cross the Tweed, directly opposite Abbotsford. The wheels of our carriage grated upon the pebbles in the bed of the stream that flows there somewhat rapidly. A rich but sad light, of rather a purple than a golden hue, was spread over the Eildon Hills at that moment; and thinking it probable that it might be the last time that Scott would cross the stream, I was not a little moved, and expressed some of my feelings in the sonnet, 'On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford for Naples.'"

Those lines recall, only to surpass, Horace's ode to the ship that was to bear Virgil to Athens:

"A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,  
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light  
Engendered, hangs on Eildon's triple height:  
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain  
For kindred power departing from their sight;  
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,  
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.  
Lift up your hearts, ye mourners! for the might  
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;  
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue  
Than sceptered king or laurelled conqueror knows,  
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,  
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,  
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope!"

Again, six years later, when musing in "Aqua-pendente," Wordsworth's thoughts went back to Scott, and to

"Old Helvellyn's brow,  
Where once together, in his day of strength,  
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free  
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads."

And then he reverts to that parting day at Abbotsford:

"Still in more than ear-deep seats,  
Survives for me, and cannot but survive,  
The tone of voice which wedded borrowed words  
To sadness not their own, when, with faint smile,  
Forced by intent to take from speech its edge,  
He said, 'When I am there, although 'tis fair,  
'Twill be another Yarrow.'"

And then he wonders that he himself, though Scott's elder, should still be able to take pleasure in that loveliness of Italian nature in art, which

"Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered  
The whole world's darling."

But the greatest, most substantial, most elaborate monument ever reared by poetic hands to a deep affection and life-long sorrow, is that which our own age has seen reared by the Laureate to his friend, in "In Memoriam":

"My Arthur! whom I shall not see,  
Till all my widowed race be run;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me."

Certainly English literature contains no other such monument. It is rooted in actual fact, according to that well-known saying of Goethe's that "all good poems are called forth by a real occasion." The depth and permanence of affections and of the sense of bereavement, are the first and central things, and all else the poem contains—feeling, thought, speculation, imagination, broodings on human destiny—flow out of that center, are but the ever-expanding circles that orb over the expanse of the poet's soul from that first central sorrow. To speak fully of all that "In Memoriam" contains, would require, not a few sen-

tences, but a volume. There is, however, less need for this, because the poem is so well known to all ; though most, if honest, would confess that they find in it some things hard to be understood. Without saying more, therefore, at present, I am glad to shelter myself under the words of my friend, the late Dr. John Brown, in his beautiful paper upon Arthur Hallam. He says :

“The purity, the temperate but fervent goodness, the firmness and depth of nature, the impassioned logic, the large, sensitive, and liberal heart, the reverence and godly fear of ‘That friend of mine who lives in God,’ which Arthur Hallam’s ‘Remains’ show, give to ‘In Memoriam’ the character of exactest portraiture. There is no excessive or misplaced affection here ; it is all founded on fact ; while everywhere and throughout it all, affection, a love that is wonderful, meets us first and leaves us last, giving form and substance and grace, and the breath of life and love, to everything that the poet’s thick-coming fancies so exquisitely frame. . . . Rising, as it were, out of the midst of the gloom of the valley of the shadow of death, how its waters flow on ! carrying life, beauty, magnificence—shadows and happy lights, depths of blackness, depths clear as the very body of heaven. How it deepens as it goes, involving larger interests, wider views, ‘thoughts that wander through eternity,’ greater affections, but still retaining its pure, living waters, its unforgotten burden of love and sorrow. How it visits every region ! ‘the long, unlovely street, pleasant villages and farms, ‘the placid ocean plains,’ waste howling wildernesses, green woods, informed with spiritual peace, now within hearing of the minster clock, now of the college bells and the vague hum of the mighty city. And overhead, through all its course, the heaven with its clouds, its sun, moon, and stars ; but always and in all places declaring its source ; and even when laying its burden of manifold and faithful affection at the feet of the Almighty Father, still remembering whence it came :

‘That friend of mine who lives in God,  
That God who ever lives and loves.  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.’

The young man whose memory his fast friend has consecrated in the hearts of all who can be touched by such love and beauty, was in nowise unworthy of all this. It is not for us to say, for it was not given us the sad privilege to know, all the hopes of unaccomplished years ; nor can we feel in its fullness all that is meant by

‘Such  
A friendship as has mastered Time ;  
Which masters Time, indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears :  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this.’”



It is more than twenty years since Dr. John Brown wrote these words, and time is not likely to reverse his verdict.

Perhaps I ought to close with "In Memoriam" as the culmination of the poetry of a friendship beyond which affection can hardly go. But even after it there are two poems which I am loth to omit. One is Sir Henry Taylor's lines "In Remembrance of the Hon. Edward Ernest Villiers." Aside from their own intrinsic merit, I am the more glad to give these lines in hope that some may be led by their rare and thoughtful beauty to turn again to the rest of his poetry. For am I wrong in thinking that, however much esteemed by a few, the poetry of Henry Taylor has not received from his contemporaries its due meed of honor? The reason may be that, as he himself has said, "in times of rapid movement, light pressures are not easily felt." It may be that young men of poetical temper at the present day have their eyes dazzled by the garish coloring, and their ears filled with the cloying music, that are so much in vogue, so that they cannot appreciate mellow but gentle thoughtfulness, and that calmer, more feeling melody which must be heard in quiet before it can be heard at all. Taylor has habitually avoided too strong and pungent excitements, and has studied a soberer standard of feeling and diction than pleases the taste of this over-stimulated age. Yet the very tempers that most require such a standard set themselves, in general, most decidedly against it. I should like, if possible, to give the whole poem as it stands. He describes his lost friend in this way :

"A grace though melancholy, manly too,  
Moulded his being ; pensive, grave, serene,  
O'er his habitual being and his mien  
Unceasing pain, by patience temper'd, threw  
A shade of sweet austerity. But seen  
In happier hours and by the friendly few,  
That curtain of the spirit was withdrawn,  
And fancy, light and playful as a fawn,  
And reason imp'd with inquisition keen,  
Knowledge long sought with ardor ever new,  
And wit love-kindled, show'd in colors true  
What genial joys with sufferings can consist :  
Then did all sternness melt as melts a mist,  
Touched by the brightness of the golden dawn,  
Aerial heights disclosing valleys green,  
And sunlights thrown the woodland tufts between,  
And flowers and spangles of the dewy lawn.

"His life was private; safely led, aloof  
From the loud world, which yet he understood  
Largely and wisely, as no worldling could.  
For he, by privilege of his nature proof  
Against false glitter, from beneath the roof  
Of privacy, as from a cave, survey'd  
With steadfast eye its flickering light and shade,  
And justly judged for evil and for good.  
But whilst he mix'd not, for his own behoof,  
In public strife, his spirit glow'd with zeal  
For truth and justice as its warp and woof,  
For freedom as its signature and seal.  
His life thus sacred from the world, discharg'd  
From vain ambition and inordinate care,  
In virtue exercised, by reverence rare  
Lifted, and by humility enlarged,  
Became a temple and a place of prayer.  
In later years he walked not singly there;  
For one was with him, ready at all hours  
His griefs, his joys, his inmost thoughts to share,  
Who buoyantly his burthens help'd to bear,  
And deck'd his altar daily with fresh flowers.

'But farther may we pass not; for the ground  
Is holier than the Muse herself may tread;  
Nor would I it should echo to a sound  
Less solemn than the service for the dead.  
Mine is inferior matter,—my own loss,  
The loss of dear delights for ever fled,  
Of reason's converse by affection fed,  
Of wisdom, counsel, solace, that across  
Life's dreariest tracks a tender radiance shed.  
Friend of my youth! though younger yet my guide,  
How much by thy unerring insight clear  
I shaped my way of life for many a year.  
What thoughtful friendship on thy death-bed died  
Friend of my youth, whilst thou wast by my side  
Autumnal days still breathed a vernal breath;  
How, like a charm, thy life to me supplied  
All waste and injury of time and tide,  
How like a disenchantment was thy death!"

The other is a lyric by Arthur Clough, perhaps the most full of impulse and of music of any he ever composed. A friend of his, with whom he had long been one in heart and mind, had left him and gone abroad for a time. During their separation a change had come over this friend, so that when they again met Clough felt as though he had become another man. Sen-

sitive as Clough was, he deeply felt the change; but, manly as he also was, he did not succumb to morbid feeling, but looked forward with a larger hope. And this is the way he felt and sang:

“As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay  
With canvas drooping, side by side,  
Two towers of sail, at dawn of day  
Are scarce, long leagues apart, desried;

“When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,  
And all the darkling hours they plied,  
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas  
By each was cleaving, side by side;

“E'en so—but why the tale reveal  
Of those whom, year by year unchanged,  
Brief absence joined anew to feel,  
Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

“At dead of night their sails were filled,  
And onward each rejoicing steered—  
Ah! neither blame, for neither willed,  
Or wist what first with dawn appeared

“To veer, how vain! on, onward strain,  
Brave barks! in light, in darkness, too!  
Through winds and tides one compass guides—  
To that, and your own selves, be true.

“But, O blithe breeze! and O great seas,  
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,  
On your wide plain they join again,  
Together lead them home at last.

“One port, methought, alike they sought,  
One purpose held, where'er they fare,—  
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas,  
At last, at last, unite them there!”

Thus it is that poetry finds a voice for some of the many tones of human affection; and, by doing so, strengthens, refines, spiritualizes them. It emphasizes that conviction which all true men feel, that in the exercise of affection only lies their true happiness. “The outward world,” says the great preacher, “is found not to be enough for a man, and he looks for some refuge near him, more intimate, more pure, more calm and stable. . . . There is no rest for us except in quietness, confidence, and

affection." We need centers, even in the visible world, to which our feelings may cling, and from centers such as the love of family and the love of friends all other good feelings spring. Without these they have no root, and philanthropy is an empty name. We begin with loving our friends about us, and thence enlarge the circle till it reaches wider and wider toward all men. Affection is first concentrated, then it is expanded.

Human friendship and affection is a main source of religion. The most affectionate natures are the most truly and beautifully religious. There may, indeed, be persons who are religious yet not affectionate, but their religion has a great want; it is unsympathetic, unattractive. The affections, when warm and vivid, do, by their very nature, drive men back upon an eternal world, in the faith and hope that the hindrances they here find to their hearts' full expansion may there be removed. As the late Frederick Maurice says, "Friendships sadly and continually interrupted suggest the belief of an unalterable friendship." Not that we are to imagine that in the one divine friendship human friendships are to be lost or absorbed. Rather we may trust and hope that friendship that has here been true and pure may there be renewed under happier conditions; that "What here is faithfully begun," there "will be completed, not undone."

J. C. SHAIRP.